

## A NEW GEOGRAPHICAL RECORD FOR *ANISYNTA CYNONE* (HEWITSON) (LEPIDOPTERA: HESPERIIDAE: TRAPEZITINAE)

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### Abstract

Torrington, on the Dutchman's Tableland in the extreme north of the New England region of New South Wales, is recorded as a new locality for *Anisynta cynone* (Hewitson). Specimens from this locality are discussed and illustrated.

### Introduction

*Anisynta cynone* (Hewitson) is an endemic Australian skipper known from the Yorke Peninsula in South Australia to the lower Murray Valley in Victoria and Deniliquin in southwestern New South Wales, and from Gunnedah, Somerton, Mt Kaputar and Bolivia Hill in northeastern New South Wales (Braby 2000). Braby (2000) recognised only two named subspecies, the southern *A. c. cynone* and the northern *A. c. gunneda* L.E. Couchman. The latter subspecies is known with certainty only from Gunnedah and Somerton (Braby 2000), with specimens from Mt Kaputar (included by Common and Waterhouse 1981) considered to be distinct (Braby 2000, Sands and New 2002).

Braby (2000) also excluded the population at Bolivia Hill (36 km south of Tenterfield in the New England region of NSW) from *A. c. gunneda*. It appears to share characteristics with *Anisynta tillyardi* Waterhouse & Lyell (Braby 2000, D.P.A. Sands, J.F.R. Kerr and E.D. Edwards pers. comms) and might be part of a natural hybrid zone (Sands and New 2002).

### Observations and discussion

During a field trip to Bolivia Hill in early April 2005, a single male resembling *A. cynone* was observed near the summit of that location. In April 2006, an unidentified species of HesperIIDae was observed near a drainage point adjacent to pastoral land on the nearby Dutchman's Tableland, which lies about 20 km to the west of Bolivia Hill. Three specimens (two males and one female), in poor condition, were collected at this location (Silent Grove Road, 1128 m, 4.0 km north of Torrington, 29°16'54"S, 151°41'08"E) in April 2007.

On 12 and 14 March 2008, two further visits were made to the Dutchman's Tableland locality. On both days weather conditions were ideal. A large number of *A. cynone* adults were observed and 26 collected (Figs 1-4).

The habitat of *A. cynone* at this locality is a section of unsealed road that passes through pastoral land. While the Dutchman's Tableland is well protected and under National Parks' control, this particular area is an exception. Surveying in the adjacent and pristine Torrington Conservation Park did not yield any observations or records of this skipper.

On occasions, some *Anisynta* Lower species may be abundant in areas that have been disturbed, although availability of snow-grass (*Poa* spp.) is a prerequisite. This newly reported occurrence is typical of a disturbed habitat. Adults appeared to originate from undulating, cleared grazing land on the high side of an unsealed road and flew along the roadside before settling on yellow flowers. Some forest is present on the lower side of the road.

This locality is significant due to the strength and abundance of the colony as well as its close proximity to the Queensland border, 22 km directly to the northwest. Here the species is well established and secure. A meeting with a landholder suggested there would not be changes to farming practices in the area in the foreseeable future.

The collected specimens show some variation in size and colouration. Average wingspan is 26 mm ( $n = 16$ ) for males and 27 mm ( $n = 10$ ) for females, close to those of *A. tillyardi*. The wing pattern is similar to that of specimens of *A. cynone* from the Mt Kaputar and Gunnedah localities (E.D. Edwards pers. comm.). As with the Mt Kaputar and Bolivia Hill populations, the subspecific status of these Dutchman's Tableland specimens is not certain and further taxonomic studies may be needed.



**Figs 1-4.** *Anisynta cynone* from the Dutchman's Tableland, NSW. (1-2) male upper and undersides; (3-4) female upper and undersides. (Scale bar = 10 mm).

### **Acknowledgements**

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### **References**

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